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DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/SE AND NEA/I;  
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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PINR](#) [MARR](#) [TU](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: (C) TURKEY PRESSES FOR USF-I INTEL TEAM VISIT TO  
ANKARA

REF: 09 ANKARA 1846

Classified By: CDA Doug Silliman; reasons 1.4(b,d)

¶1. (S) Turkish ambassador to Iraq Murat Ozcelik requested a meeting January 8 with the Charge to emphasize President Gul, Prime Minister Erdogan and Minister of Interior Atalay's strong interest in a proposed visit by a USF-I (formerly MNF-I) intelligence team to Ankara in late January or early February (REFTEL). Ozcelik requested the Charge inform Washington that a visit would be critical to maintaining psychological pressure on the terrorist Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) leadership. That pressure, Ozcelik contended, is key to the GoT's on-going effort to encourage "reconcilable" fighters and PKK supporters harboring in northern Iraq "to come down from the mountain" and back across the border into Turkey, where they would be free to pursue their political agenda through non-violent means. During a separate meeting with us the same day, Ministry of Interior (MoI) Secretary General Eyup Tepe confirmed his minister's conviction that a USF-I intelligence team visit is crucial to eroding the morale of the PKK and convincing its fighters that terrorism as a political tool is unacceptable, not only to the GoT, but to Turkey's most valued ally.

¶2. (C) Ozcelik reported KRG President Barzani "fully understands" that the December 7 PKK ambush and killing of seven Jandarma in Tokat province threatens to revive anti-Kurdish enmity among Turks and introduce a serious impediment to improving relations between Ankara and Erbil. Noting that post-Tokat, Turkey's major opposition parties have accused the KRG of colluding with the PKK, Ozcelik reiterated his perception that Barzani is now willing to reinforce his verbal criticism of the terrorists with tangible steps to compel their departure from northern Iraq (REFTEL).

¶3. (S) COMMENT: A USF-I visit would strengthen the hand of MFA, MoI and the Turkish National Intelligence Organization, which want to cultivate a broad-based mutually beneficial

relationship with the KRG, in their inter-agency dispute with the Turkish General Staff, which remains skeptical both of Barzani and non-military solutions to the PKK refuge in northern Iraq. Ozcelik indicated the optics of a USF-I visit are more important than specific accomplishments. A more senior USF-I intel team lead would likely help the GoT in selling the success of its outreach to the KRG and Iraqi government and in pressing ahead with its National Unity Project to address the grievances of Turkey's Kurdish population.

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